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ABSTRACT

This document is the results of the 2001 employee survey (Quality Evaluation of Service Trends) for all Howard Community College Employees. The response rate was 63%. Ratings for various topics and services were made on a five-point scale ranging from poor to excellent. Employees were also given an "unfamiliar with" category, which did not count in the final results. The top five rated service units included: (1) information technology: print shop; (2) div offices staff: Bus/Sci & Tech/Arts & Humanities; (3) division faculty: science and technology; (4) TLSD: audiovisual services; and (5) test centers. The campus climate issue with both high ratings for importance and satisfaction was high priority on student learning. The item with lowest rating in the campus climate section was parking. In the category of job satisfaction, the highest rated item was resources available to carry out one's job. The highest rating of job satisfaction is for employees who have worked 1-5 years and over 20 years. The 5 areas with the lowest ratings in all categories are the following in order of dissatisfaction: (1) security: timely & effective resolution; (2) definitions of performance levels/merit pay; (3) security: responsiveness to emergencies; (4) performance appraisal program; and (5) athletic center. (MZ)

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The 2001 QUEST Survey Results

Howard Community College

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HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
You Can Get There From Here.

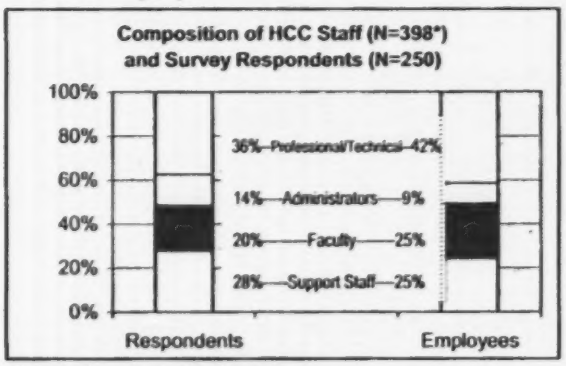
The 2001 QUEST Survey Results

Annual Staff Survey

Research Report Number 110 December 2001

Howard Community College has demonstrated that its employees' views are important by annually providing them the opportunity to give their assessment of college services, campus climate, job satisfaction, and college leadership. Since 1990, the QUEST (Quality Evaluation of Service Trends) Survey has been used to gather that information from employees. The survey results are used in making decisions about resource allocation, improvement activities, and employee recognition. This report presents an overview of the survey findings. A set of detailed tables is available.

The year 2001 marks the third time the annual QUEST Survey was available on the Internet. Of this year's 250 respondents, the majority (230 or 92%) chose to complete the survey electronically. The overall response rate for the survey was the highest it has been since 1993 – 63% (up from 57% last year).



*Includes 28 part-time budgeted employees.

Ratings on College Service Areas

On the QUEST Survey, ratings on service areas are made on a five-point scale ranging from excellent to poor. There is also an "unfamiliar with" category that is not used to calculate mean ratings. That category, however, may be useful for service units to determine whether they need to make their services better known to their associate employees.

The QUEST Survey was conceived as an instrument that would not be cast in stone, but would, rather, be adaptable to special needs. This year the numbers of items on the Development Office and on Security were expanded. In all, there were 68 items in the service category. Ratings ranged from 2.75 to 4.26. The units shown in the table are the 11 units that received the ten highest ratings on the survey (there was one tie).

Of the 68 service areas on the survey, 24 received ratings of 4.0 or higher, 32 were rated between 3.50 and 3.99, and 12 were rated below 3.50. It is generally items in this latter group that are considered areas for potential improvement.

Top Rated Units on the 2001 QUEST Survey

Service Units	Mean	Excellent Above Avg*
1. Information Technology: Print Shop	4.26	82%
2. Div Ofc Staff: Bus/Sci & Tech/Arts & Humanities	4.25	79%
2. Cultural Arts: Theatre	4.25	80%
3. Division Faculty: Science & Technology	4.23	82%
4. TLSD: Audio-Visual Services	4.22	81%
5. Test Center	4.19	81%
6. Division Office Staff: Health/Social Sciences	4.17	77%
7. President's Office Staff	4.15	81%
8. Acad. Support: Learning Assistance Center	4.14	82%
9. TLSD: Library	4.13	76%
10. Division Office Staff: English/Languages/ Math	4.11	77%

*These figures exclude those who chose "unfamiliar with" or who gave no rating.

In addition to the mean rating, it is informative to examine the service ratings by the percentage of respondents that gave ratings of four or five – above average or excellent. *Division Faculty: Science & Technology, Learning Assistance Center,* and the *Print Shop* had the highest percentages of "Excellent" and "Above Average" ratings: all 82%. Other service areas not shown on the table that had above 75% were: *Information Technology: Network/ E-mail, Academic Support: Student Counseling, Television Studio & Video Services, Senior Administrative Office staff, Division Faculty: Health Sciences, Children's Learning Center, and Division Faculty: English/Languages.*

There were 12 units that had 15% or more of respondents giving them "Below Average" or "Poor" ratings. Those units were: *Security Service: all four items, Athletic & Fitness Center, Plant Operations: Housekeeping, Web Page, Cafeteria, Academic Support: Retention Services, Plant Operations: Engineering/Maintenance, Plant Operations: Grounds,* and *Development: Community Outreach.*

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In addition to the mean and qualitative ratings on survey items, the dimension of change from year to year deserves attention. Of the 54 items that can be compared between the 2000 and 2001 surveys, 35 declined in ratings, 15 went up, and four remained the same. Most changes were slight, but there were five units that had changes of 0.25 or greater – one in a positive direction, the others in a negative one. The unit with the greatest positive change was *Information Technology: Telephones* (up by 0.25 to 3.95), and the area showing the greatest drop was *Financial Aid* (down by 0.47 to 3.71). Other declines of 0.25 or more were seen for: *Business Office: Accounts Payable/Purchasing, Web Page,* and *Security Service* (this year's ratings on Security items were averaged so a comparison could be made to last year).

On QUEST Surveys over the years, there have been differences in ratings among the employee groups on campus. At the individual unit level such differences among employee groups influence overall ratings. Traditionally, the faculty gave the highest ratings and support group the lowest. This year administrators and faculty gave the most positive ratings. A look at the top three ratings given by each employee group clearly shows the disparity in the ratings.

Support Group's Ratings		
1	Information Technology: Print Shop	4.14
2	Div. Faculty: Science & Technology	4.03
2	TLS Division: Audio-Visual Services	4.03
2	IT: Network/E-mail	4.03
3	Div. Office Staff: Health/Social Sciences	4.02
3	TLS Division: Library	4.02
Faculty's Ratings		
1	Div.Office Staff: Bus/SciTech/Arts&Hum.	4.54
2	TLS Division: Audio-Visual Services	4.46
2	President's Office Staff	4.46
3	TLS Division: Library	4.45
Administrators' Ratings		
1	Children's Learning Center	4.48
2	Academic Support: Learning Ast Center	4.45
3	IT: Student Computer Support	4.41
Professional/Technical Ratings		
1	Transfer Services	4.40
2	Cultural Arts: Theatre	4.34
3	Test Center	4.33

While there is no unit that is in the top three ratings of all four employee groups, there were five that were in the top ten ratings of all four. If a star is awarded for each employee group rating in the top ten, those five are HCC's four-star units. Two units receive three stars for being in the top ten ratings of three employee groups and ten units get two stars.

SERVICE STARS

☆☆☆☆

Division Office Staff: Business/Science & Technology/ Arts & Humanities
Cultural Arts: Theatre
Division Faculty: Science & Technology
Teaching & Learning Services Division: Audio-Visual Services
Test Center

☆☆☆

Information Technology: Print Shop
Division Office Staff: Health/Social Sciences

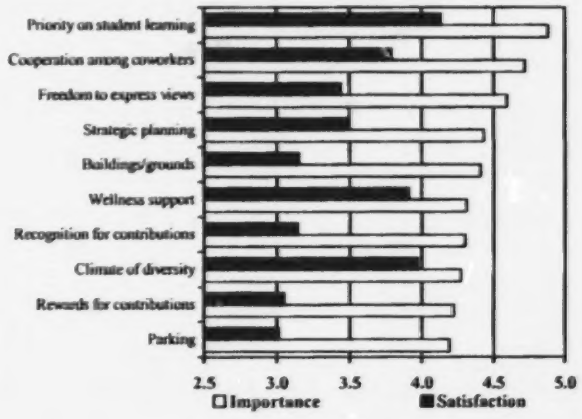
☆☆

President's Office Staff
Academic Support: Learning Assistance Center
Teaching & Learning Services Division: Library
Division Office Staff: English/Languages/Math
Division Faculty: English/Languages
Division Faculty: Health Sciences
Academic Support: Student Counseling
Transfer Services
Information Technology: Network/E-mail
Bookstore

Ratings on Campus Climate

HCC employees were asked to assess campus climate on the QUEST Survey by rating the importance of ten climate elements and then their satisfaction with those elements on five-point scales. The chart below shows those ratings. While all importance ratings were above 4.00, only one satisfaction rating was: *High priority on student learning.* Campus climate elements that were rated below 3.50 in satisfaction were: *Freedom to openly express viewpoints, Effective strategic planning, General condition of buildings and grounds, Recognition for individual or team contributions, Rewards for contributing to improved quality,* and *Parking.*

2001Campus Climate: Importance/Satisfaction



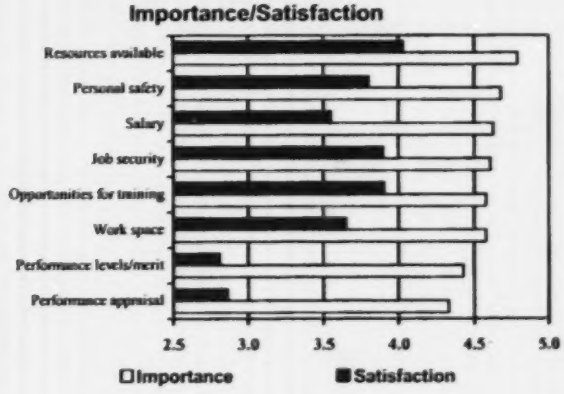
There were differences in campus climate ratings by employment category, with administrators being the most positive in their ratings and support group the least positive.

CAMPUS CLIMATE	
Faculty	**3.85**
Administrators	**3.91**
Professional/Technical Staff	**3.64**
Support Staff	**3.61**
OVERALL RATING ON CAMPUS CLIMATE	***3.72***

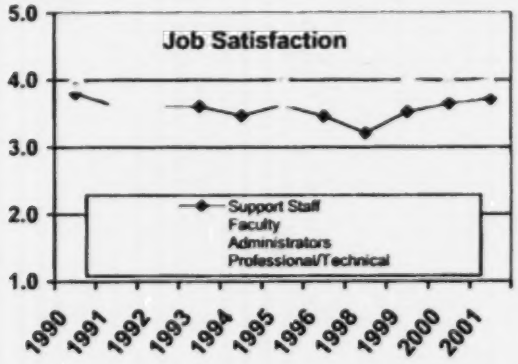
Ratings on Job Satisfaction

Respondents also rated the importance and satisfaction of eight elements of job satisfaction. All importance ratings were over 4.00, as seen on the chart below. The only item that had a satisfaction rating over 4.00 was *Resources available to you to carry out your job.* There were two elements that had ratings under 3.50: *Definition and assigning of performance levels/merit pay* and *The performance appraisal process.*

2001 Job Satisfaction: Importance/Satisfaction



In a deviation from past patterns on the QUEST Survey, administrators exhibited higher ratings on job satisfaction than the faculty or the other employee groups. (It should be noted that the composition of the "Administrator" and "Professional/Technical" categories has changed over the years.) With a range between 3.71 and 4.00 for job satisfaction ratings, the differences among the four employee groups is less than its been since 1993.



Respondents to the survey are asked the number of years they have worked at HCC. The highest rates of satisfaction are for those employed the least (1-5 years) and the most (over 20 years) years.

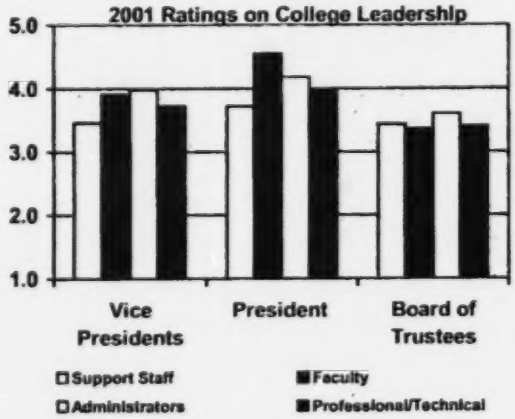
JOB SATISFACTION by YEARS AT HCC	
1 to 5 Years	**3.89**
6 to 10 Years	**3.79**
11 to 15 Years	**3.64**
16 to 20 Years	**3.62**
Over 20 Years	**3.80**
OVERALL RATING ON JOB SATISFACTION	***3.83***

Ratings on College Leadership/Governance

This section of the survey contains three sub-sections, one each for the vice presidents, the president, and the board of trustees. In each, there were four items and an overall rating. Most items in the leadership section were down slightly over last year. The only decline over 0.10 was for the vice presidents on the item *Involve you in decisions that affect you.* That item and *Share information you need to do your job* were rated lower than 3.50 for the vice presidents. The president had no ratings under 3.50.

RATINGS ON LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE		
HCC'S VICE PRESIDENTS	**2000**	**2001**
Encourage creative and innovative ideas	3.79	3.70
Exhibit leadership that enhances climate	3.65	3.60
Share information you need to do your job	3.52	3.47
Involve you in decisions that affect you	3.27	3.12
Overall Rating on Vice Presidents	***3.77***	***3.72***
HCC'S PRESIDENT		
Fosters a student-oriented approach	4.16	4.18
Exhibits leadership that enhances climate	3.95	4.00
Encourages creative and innovative ideas	3.97	3.98
Builds a climate of trust and openness	3.69	3.60
Overall Rating on the President	***4.04***	***4.05***
HCC'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES		
Makes appropriate decisions on resources	3.53	3.49
Provides effective guidance to the institution	3.44	3.39
Exhibits leadership that enhances climate	3.40	3.32
Builds a climate of trust and openness	3.30	3.25
Overall Rating on Board of Trustees	***3.50***	***3.43***

Faculty gave the highest ratings to the president and administrators gave the highest ratings to the vice presidents and the board of trustees as shown in the chart below.



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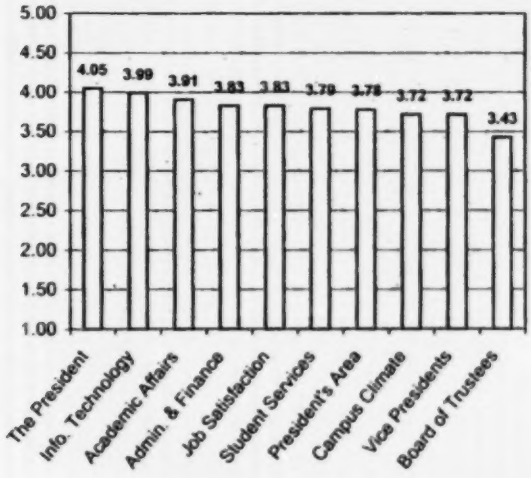
Assessing the Results

There were 104 separate items on this year's QUEST Survey. They can be grouped into ten areas, which are shown with their overall means in the chart below. It can be seen that almost all of these major sections are above 3.50.

Comparison of Overall Means of Major QUEST Survey Components: 2001



In spite of these relatively high overall means, there are always opportunities for improvement. Of all the 104 items on the survey, there are 28 (or 27%) that were rated below the 3.50 figure that has customarily been used as a cutoff point. The following chart shows these areas, their ratings, and the section of the survey on which they appeared.

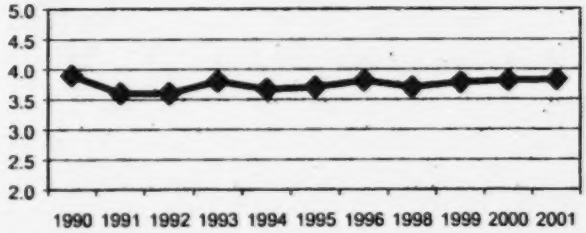
QUEST 2001: Ratings under 3.50		
Leadership	BOT- decisions affecting college resources	3.49
Climate	Effective strategic planning	3.49
Leadership	VPs-Share needed information	3.47
Service	Plant Ops: Engineering/Maintenance	3.47
Climate	Freedom to openly express viewpoints	3.44
Leadership	Overall Rating on Board of Trustees	3.43
Service	Plant Operations: Grounds	3.43
Leadership	BOT-Provides effective guidance	3.39
Leadership	BOT-Leadership enhances campus climate	3.32
Service	Athletics & sports programs	3.29
Special	Satisfaction with new governance model	3.27
Leadership	BOT-Builds a climate of trust & openness	3.25
Service	Academic Support: Retention Services	3.23
Service	Cafeteria	3.17
Climate	General condition of buildings and grounds	3.15
Climate	Recognition for individual/team contributions	3.14
Leadership	VPs-Involve you in decisions	3.12
Service	Plant Operations: Housekeeping	3.11
Climate	Rewards for contributing to improved quality	3.05
Service	Security: customer service & helpfulness	3.02
Climate	Adequacy of parking facilities	3.01
Service	Security Service: visibility on campus	2.97
Service	Web Page	2.95
Service	Athletic& Fitness Center	2.91
Satisfaction	The performance appraisal process	2.86
Service	Security: responsiveness to emergencies	2.81
Satisfaction	Definition of performance levels/merit pay	2.81
Service	Security: timely & effective resolution	2.75

There were 29 items on the survey (28%) that were rated 4.00 or higher. The table below shows the 14 areas that received the highest ratings - 4.10 or above.

QUEST 2001: Top Rated Areas		
Service	IT: Print Shop	4.26
Service	Div Off Staff:Bus/Sci & Tech/Arts & Humanities	4.25
Service	Cultural Arts: Theatre	4.25
Service	Division Faculty: Science & Technology	4.23
Service	TLS Division: Audio-Visual Services	4.22
Service	Test Center	4.19
Leadership	President-Fosters student-oriented approach	4.18
Service	Division Office Staff: Health/Social Sciences	4.17
Service	President's Office Staff	4.15
Service	Acad. Support: Learning Assistance Center	4.14
Service	TLS Division: Library	4.13
Climate	High priority on student learning	4.13
Service	Division Office Staff: Eng/Languages/ Math	4.11
Service	Division Faculty: English/Languages	4.10

It appears that most employees are satisfied with their jobs at HCC. The overall job satisfaction rating on this survey was 3.83, slightly above last year and the highest it has been since 1990, the first year of the QUEST Survey. Areas of dissatisfaction had to do with the assignation of performance levels, the appraisal system, rewards for contributing to improved quality, and recognition for individual or team contributions.

OVERALL RATINGS ON JOB SATISFACTION 1990-2001



These findings from the QUEST Survey provide focus for targeting improvement activities. As importantly, the findings present an opportunity to offer special recognition to the units whose quests for excellence have been validated by these results.

[Please direct questions or comments about this report to Barbara Livieratos, Office of Planning, Research, & Organizational Development, Howard Community College, Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia, Maryland 21044. Phone: 410-772-4707, E-mail BLivieratos@howardcc.edu]

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